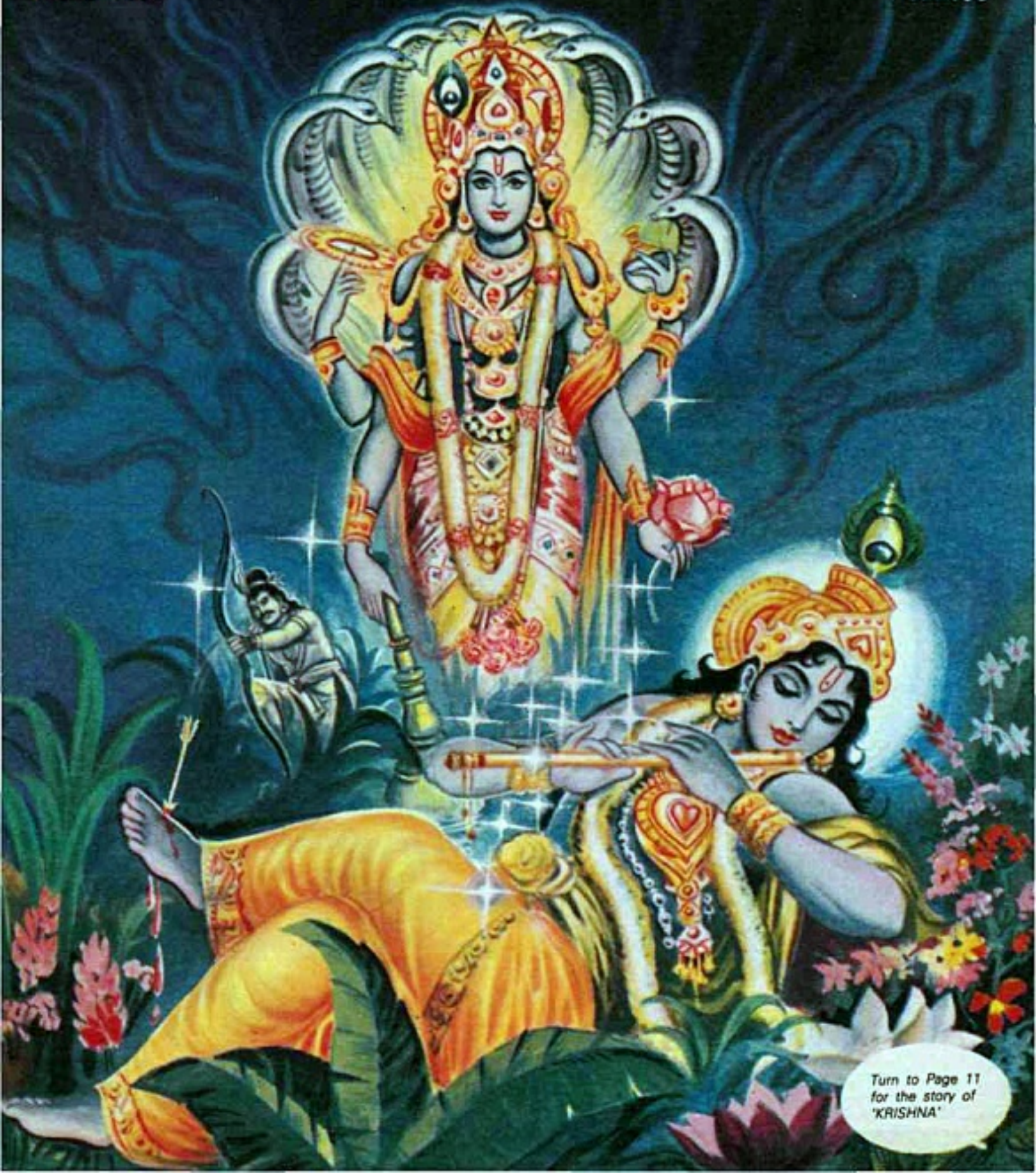


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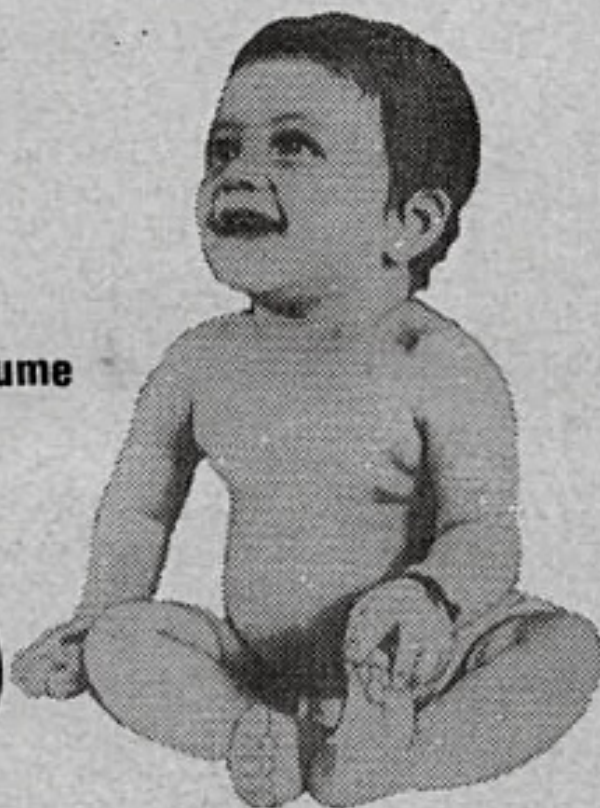
Time has really changed. I remember very well how Mummy used to do all her house-hold work and even then spared time to massage me

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"Oh yes... I told him I use it because you say it's good. And because I like it."

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"Ya, that too! Mummy, can I have some of this chocolate cake? I promise to brush my teeth later...!"

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The tasty, foamy toothpaste that protects both gums and teeth.



STUDENTS AND FREEDOM MOVEMENT

NEW DELHI: The Chief Executive Councillor, Jag Parvesh Chandra has announced that Delhi Administration has instituted prizes worth Rs. 4.50 lakhs for the best three manuscripts for a book on "History of the Freedom Movement" (1857-1947) for students of secondary and senior secondary schools. Details of the prizes are listed below:

1ST PRIZE

Rs. 1,50,000 (One for English and one for Hindi)

2ND PRIZE

Rs. 50,000 (One for English and one for Hindi)

3RD PRIZE

Rs. 25,000 (One for English and one for Hindi)

The prizes have been declared State Awards by the Finance Ministry. As such they have assumed greater prestige besides rendering the award money exempt from income tax.

The basic purpose of writing such a book is to keep the younger generation of our people fully informed about the freedom movement. Accounts of the heroic role of freedom movements will instil a sense of love of country among the young citizens. This will promote secular outlook and strengthen national integration, which is the very condition of our national survival.

Manuscripts will be accepted either in English or Hindi and may contain about 40,000 words. Authors should send three copies of their manuscripts typed in double space under registered acknowledgement due cover by 31st December, 1985, to Secretary to the Chief Executive Councillor, Delhi Administration, Old Secretariat, Delhi-110054.

A panel of eminent writers and reputed historians will screen the manuscripts.

Delhi Administration will hold the copyright of the first-prize-winning manuscripts and the right to translate, print, publish and sell the book in any Indian language besides English and Hindi and incorporate such changes as it deems fit. The second and third prize winners and other authors may get their manuscripts printed by any private publisher.

For further clarifications please write to the **Chief Executive Councillor, Delhi Administration, Old Secretariat, Delhi-110054.**

NEXT ISSUE

- *The Ungrateful Guest—An Arabian Night Story*
- *ANDHAK—Narada handles a Demon from Indian Classics*
- *Descent of the Ganga—in Rivers of India*
- *The Season of Slaughter—in the feature Nature's Kingdom*
- *A Legend of India, A Humorous Tale told through pictures, Towards Better English and all the other regular features like Newsflash, Let Us Know and a bunch of absorbing stories.*

Thoughts to be treasured

To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts.

Swami Vivekananda

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Vol. 15 April 1985 No. 10

IN THIS ISSUE

Mythology

- End of the Incarnation
—in Story of Krishna ... Page 11

Stories

- Ten Clever Vizirs ... Page 23
The Scholar and the Secret ... Page 28
Made of Moonlight ... Page 36
The Precious Stones ... Page 39
The Will and the Way ... Page 43
Frog in the Well ... Page 47
Two Masters ... Page 55
A Beard for Sale ... Page 58

Picture Stories

- Oliver Twist ... Page 19
The Ignoble turns Noble ... Page 13
Origin of the Ganga ... Page 51

Features

- AJMIL—Characters from
Indian Classics ... Page 32
Keeping Cool—
with a Jumbo-sized Fan ... Page 34

**AND Newsflash, Do You Know, Let Us
Know and more!**



CHANDAMAMA

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

STORY OF KRISHNA

The *Story of Krishna* concludes in this issue. Hope, the series will inspire our young readers to appreciate the great ideals and traditions which are there behind the making of Indian civilisation.

You will read in this issue the circumstance in which Krishna left his body. But for thousands of years Krishna has been an immeasurable influence on the minds of men not only in India but also abroad. The *Gita* remains a source of wisdom, light and spiritual strength for countless people. For innumerable devotees, Krishna is the ever-living guide and God.

We begin an absorbing story from the next issue—*The Saga of Sri Jagannath*.



GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

पुराणमित्येव न साधु सर्वं न चापि काव्यं नवमित्यवज्ञम् ।
सन्तः परिक्रान्तिरब्धं भवन्ते मूढः परप्रत्ययनेयबुद्धिः ॥

*Puranamityeva na sadhu sarvaan
na capi kavayam navamityavadyam
Santah parikranyatarad bhajante
mudhah paropratyayaneyabuddhih*

A book is not sacred simply because it is ancient; nor is a book to be ignored simply because it is recently written. The wise give recognition to a work on its merit; fools echo others' opinions.

The Malavikagnimitram

NEWSFLASH



To See a Candle in the Moon

Can we see a light as small as that of a candle from the distance of a moon? We can, in 1993, when a new telescope under preparation by astronomers is set up on Mount Palomar, California. This can show objects that are 12 billion light-years away.

Gigantic Music Lovers

One thousand whales got trapped in a pool surrounded by thick ice gradually growing thicker between Alaska and the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Navy dug a channel into the sea, but the nervous whales won't leave the pool. Someone suggested that since dolphins respond to music, their cousins, the whales may respond too! Several melodies were tried out. At last the whales responded to classical music. Following the sailing music-makers, they came out into their freedom in the sea through the tunnel.



India—Africa Bhai Bhai

India and Africa were separated only by a narrow corridor, long long ago, according to an Indian scientist, Dr. Ashok Sahani. Creatures from one continent could pass on to the other easily, an analysis of fossils show.

Welcome to Visitors from other Planets

If beings from other planets visit our Earth, where will they land? On the slope of Oriental Mountain, 80 miles south of Mexican City, a gentleman named Antonio Vazquez Alva, is building an airport (or flying saucer port?) for them. He expects them sooner or later.



Krishna

—By Manoj Das

(Story so far: Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu, not only destroyed numerous demons and demoniac beings that personified dark and hostile forces, but also paved the way for the spiritual progress of the aspirants. Many were his wonderful deeds—from putting an end to Kamsa's tyranny to leading the righteous Pandavas to victory against the sinful and arrogant Kauravas.)

END OF THE INCARNATION

Thousands of citizens and sages and scholars turned up to greet Yudhishthira who became the king over a vast land. He ruled from Hastinapura with the help of his brothers. They followed the ideals of truth and justice most strictly.

"It has been a long time since I left my city Dwaraka. I should

return there, for my old parents must be longing to see me," one day Krishna told Yudhishthira.

Krishna had stood by the Pandavas through the most critical times in their lives. He had led them to victory. He had never murmured in the face of any difficulty nor had he ever missed his charming city on the





sea. How can the Pandavas now dissuade him from returning home?

They bade him a tearful farewell.

After the tumultuous decades time appeared to be rolling away peacefully. Yudhisthira performed a great Yajna and that made him the king of kings, the emperor of Bharata. Krishna was present on the occasion.

Krishna had defeated or destroyed the demons and the wicked kings who were his foes. Dwaraka was now a haven of happiness. The Yadavas—the members of Krishna's family—were enjoying the fruits of

Krishna's labours and sacrifices. They were expected to devote themselves to higher pursuits of life. But, such is the nature of man that when he is safe and assured of peace and prosperity, he lets himself go the way his passions and desires take him.

That is what the Yadavas were doing. They became very proud of their position. They whiled away their time gambling, drinking and quarrelling. Particularly arrogant and vain were the younger Yadavas. They became silly in their behaviour and disrespectful of elders and sages.

Krishna was Divine. He loved and helped those who nursed aspiration and devotion in their hearts. He was not attached to the Yadavas simply because they were his kin. He would not care for those who would choose to go astray.

One day the great sages Viswamitra, Kanva and Narada were on a visit to Dwaraka. As they would enter the castle of Krishna, some of the Yadavas drew their attention to a veiled person who looked like a young lady big with child.

O Pious ones, will you please predict whether this lady would

be delivered of a male child or a female?" they asked, feigning humility.

The sages at once understood that those frivolous Yadavas were only eager to have a hearty laugh at their cost. Casting an angry look on them they declared that whatever came out of the person under veil would be the instrument of destruction of the Yadava dynasty!

The pranksters slink away at this angry outburst of the sages. The agitated sages calmed down only after meeting Krishna and reporting to him of the encounter and their curse.

Krishna knew that it had to be so, for it was time for Queen

Gandhari's curse to bear fruit. Had she not said, in extreme anguish at losing all her hundred sons, that Krishna's dynasty will be destroyed in thirtysix years?

The doomsday was approaching.

The young man who had been dressed to appear like a lady was none other than Shamba, Krishna's son. Lo and behold! a lump of metal emerged from his person. They carried it to the seashore and continued to rub it against a hard stone. By and by it became so small that it could not be held tight any longer. It was thrown into the sea. The dust to which the metal had been reduced was washed away





by the tide, of course only to be washed back to the shore. Out of them grew a strange crop of grass.

One afternoon while the citizens of Dwaraka were singing and frolicking, something strange happened. A mighty whirlwind seemed to strike the earth. Then it rose upward. As everybody looked on, the sky was covered by a colourful whirling object. It gradually rose higher and higher and grew smaller and smaller and disappeared from vision.

All remained spell-bound and awe-struck, but only a few knew what the phenomenon was.

Krishna's weapon, the celestial Sudarshana Chakra, was leaving the earth atmosphere.

Still fewer understood what it meant—that Krishna would soon withdraw from his physical incarnation.

Ominous signs were seen from that day onward. Rodents cut short the flowing hairs, beards and moustaches of sleeping heroes! Swans hooted like owls and the goats instead of bleating howled like jackals! Cows gave birth to foals and bitches to kitten!

Sometimes some people could see two weird figures, a male and a female, moving about in the dark. They appeared and disappeared, in the process stealing away auspicious objects like marital jewellery from women and talismans from men.

Most of the Yadavas, however, were too engrossed in their lustful enjoyments to take note or such happenings.

"Extremely inauspicious moment is ahead. Let us go over to the solitude of the sacred Prabhas and pass the time there," one day Krishna told the Yadavas.

The Yadavas had grown so

blunt in their minds that they saw in the proposal nothing more than the opportunity for a merry picnic.

Carrying large quantities of food and drink, they set out for Prabhas early in the morning.

Long ago, once when the Moon-god had lost his lustre he had been directed to bathe in the sea and do penance. He did so and recovered his *prabha* or lustre. Thus the place of his penance came to be called Prabhas. It was a beautiful place between the sea and a thick forest.

At Prabhas the Yadavas should have dedicated themselves to prayeres and meditation. But they fell into a drinking bout as soon as they reached the place.

A quarrel broke out between Satyaki and Kritavarma, two Pandava warriors of yesterday. Being dead drunk, they hardly knew what they were doing. Satyaki suddenly unsheathed his sword and beheaded Kritavarma. Supporters of Kritavarma began to belabour Satyaki with vessels and bowls from which they were taking food and drink. Satyaki died, but by then all the Yadavas had been locked



in senseless scuffle. It grew more and more violent.

Krishna saw the degradation of the Yadavas. Disgusted, he uprooted a sheaf of grass that turned into metal crowbars in his hand. Instantly all the grass on the shore changed into crowbars. The grass had sprouted from the metal dust the Yadavas had thrown into the sea. The mad Yadavas found them handy to fight with. Before their wailing womenfolk they fell dead one after another.

Balarama had quietly left the scene. Krishna sent for Arjuna at Hastinapura and ordered a few trusted men still in their

senses to escort the women back to Dwaraka.

Krishna then found out Balarama who had left his body, leaning against a tree. His spirit, resembling a golden serpent, was entering the sea. Krishna chose a bushy spot and lay down there. Soon there appeared a hunter, Jara by name. The tender soles of Krishna's feet looked like the ears of a deer to the crouching hunter. He had lately found a piece of metal from the tummy of a fish and had fixed it to an arrow. Needless to say, it was a portion of the very metal Shamba had produced!

Jara shot his arrow and went forward to claim his prey. Imagine his horror when he saw the arrow stuck to one of Krishna's feet.

Krishna smiled. He consoled

and blessed the hunter who had released him from his human incarnation. His spirit, taking the form of a luminous shaft of light, rose to heaven. Soon Arjuna arrived on the scene. Indescribable was his shock at what he saw. But he had duties to perform. He changed his heart into stone and supervised the funeral rites of Krishna, Balarama and the other Yadavas. Krishna's aggrieved parents died soon after Arjuna's arrival.

Arjuna then led the women-folk of Dwaraka, along with the surviving aged and children, towards Hastinapura. As soon as they stepped out of Dwaraka, a surging tide submerged the magnificent city built by Krishna. From distance the hapless Arjuna looked at the rolling waves and sighed and resumed his journey.

The End



THE IGNOBLE TURNS NOBLE

Once a villager, on a visit to the town, told the Sultan's Vizir that the Sultan ought to meet him — who was the poorest and the most ignoble man in the country.



The Vizir reported this to the Sultan who grew curious to meet the poorest and the most ignoble man. He came out.



Bowing to the Sultan, the villager said, "My lord, meet one of the richest and noblest men in the country!" The surprised Sultan asked, "Were you not the poorest and the most ignoble?"



"I was," said the villager. "But now I am one of the richest and noblest because the Sultan himself came out to meet me!" Needless to say, the villager returned with a big reward.



FRUIT OR FRUITS?

"Reena, you're so irresponsible! You did not eat those oranges nor did you remind me about them. All the fruits are rotten!"

"Rajesh, for the first ever time I hear that you have to be reminded of oranges. By the way, you can't say fruits. Fruit is enough."

"You are wrong. *By their fruits ye shall know them* is a famous sentence in 'St. Mathews' of the *Holy Bible*. We read it only yesterday," said Rajesh, vehemently.

"It must be a printing mistake..."

Grandpa Chowdhury entered their study and the argument stopped.

"Both of you are right. When it refers to the produce of the same tree or of the same kind, *fruit* will cover all. Rajesh should say 'All the fruit are rotten'—not all the fruits since he refers to only oranges. But *fruits* is not at all incorrect when it refers to varieties of them or when used figuratively, say in an expression like the fruits of labour, or in the Biblical line just quoted by Rajesh."

"Grandpa, I am a bit confused about *fish*. What is its plural?" asked Reena.

"The plural of *fish* can be *fish* or *fishes*. Both are correct, unlike *deer*, or *sheep* or *offspring* or *poetry* or *scenery*, which remain unchanged in their plural," replied Grandpa.

"Alphabet is yet another word!" joined in Rajesh.

"Yes, but you can say *alphabets* when you refer to the letters of more than one language. You can say that there is little difference between the *alphabets* of Bengali and Assamese."

"Grandpa, isn't the plural of spectacle spectacles? Babu, a Senior Student, says that..."

Grandpa Chowdhury was called by a friend over the phone. He said that he will answer Rajesh later.



Oliver Twist



Oliver Twist has spent the nine years of his life as an orphan in the workhouse. All the orphans are kept hungry. But now Oliver has been told by his friends to ask for more food...



The board was sitting in a solemn meeting when Mr Bumble rushed into the room. "I beg your pardon, sirs. Oliver Twist has asked for more!" Horror was seen on every face. "Do I understand he asked for more after he had eaten his supper?" said one of them. "He did, sir," replied Bumble. "That boy will be hung," said another member of the board.



Oliver was ordered into instant confinement. But let it not be supposed that Oliver was denied the benefit of exercise, or the pleasure of society. As for exercise, it was nice, cold weather, and he was allowed to wash every morning in a stone yard in the presence of Mr. Bumble, who prevented him from catching cold by repeated applications of the cane.

As for society, he was carried every day into the hall where the boys dined, and there sociably flogged as a public warning and an example. In the meantime, a notice had been pasted on the outer wall of the workhouse.

REWARD
of
£5

for anyone who will
take a nine year old
boy named Oliver
Twist off the hands
of the parish



It chanced one morning while Oliver's affairs were in this auspicious and happy state, that Mr. Gamfield, a chimney-sweep, happened to see the poster, and forthwith decided to buy Oliver. This was, of course, a question for the magistrate. "Well, now," said this old gentleman to whom Mr. Bumble had brought Oliver along to see. "I presume he's fond of chimney-sweeping."

"If I was to try and bind him to any other trade, he'd run away tomorrow," Bumble said. "You have no cause, believe me, to fear for the boy's future," said Mr. Gamfield. "I will treat him well and feed him, you may be sure. I am an open-hearted and honest man, as I'm sure you can see from just looking at me."



It was the critical moment of Oliver's fate. If the magistrate had signed the papers immediately, Oliver would have been hurried off. But, as it happened, the magistrate suddenly became aware of the terrified expression on Oliver's face. "My boy," said the old gentleman, "What's the matter?" Claspng his hands together, Oliver begged and pleaded not to be put in the care of Mr. Gamfield.

"I refuse to sign the contract," the magistrate said. The next morning, the public were informed that Oliver Twist was To Let. The Board, meanwhile, had decided that Oliver should be sent to sea, and with this in mind, Mr. Bumble was sent to make some preliminary enquiries. On his way he met Mr. Sowerberry, the undertaker, who, as it happened, was in need of a young apprentice.



As a result of their conversation, arrangements were swiftly made to put Oliver in the tender care of Mr. Sowerberry. It was for this reason that Oliver found himself that night with a new bed in the shop among Mr. Sowerberry's coffins.



Oliver was awakened the next morning by a loud kicking on the door. On opening it he found himself confronted by a large boy who was busily devouring a slice of bread and butter. "You don't know who I am, I suppose," he said. "Well, I'm Mr. Noah Claypole, and you're under me."



"Now take down the shutters, you idle young ruffian." With this, Mr. Claypole gave a kick to Oliver and entered the shop with a dignified air. After having taken down the shutters, Oliver followed Noah into the kitchen for breakfast, where Mrs. Sowerberry was preparing it. "Noah," she said. "I've saved a nice little bit of bacon from the master's breakfast. Oliver, there's your tea. Take it into the shop and drink it there."

Although Oliver could see that he was once more on stingy rations, he tried to make the best of matters, and after a month's trial he was formally apprenticed. It was a nice sickly season and coffins were in great use. In the course of a few weeks, Oliver acquired a great deal of experience.



Oliver carried on in this manner for some time until something occurred which was to change the whole course of his life. Oliver and Noah descended into the kitchen to banquet off a piece of mutton. Being in a bad mood, Noah decided that it was an ideal opportunity to tease young Oliver Twist.

To Continue

TEN CLEVER VIZIRS

The Sultan had ten clever Vizirs. No wonder that the Sultan should think himself and his Sultanate quite safe.

The Vizirs, no doubt, were clever, but they were far from being good. Their only interest lay in stealing money from the Sultan's treasury and in exploiting his subjects.

The administration became weak. A king was waiting for an opportunity to conquer the Sultanate. At last he struck. We should not be surprised even if some of the corrupt Vizirs had

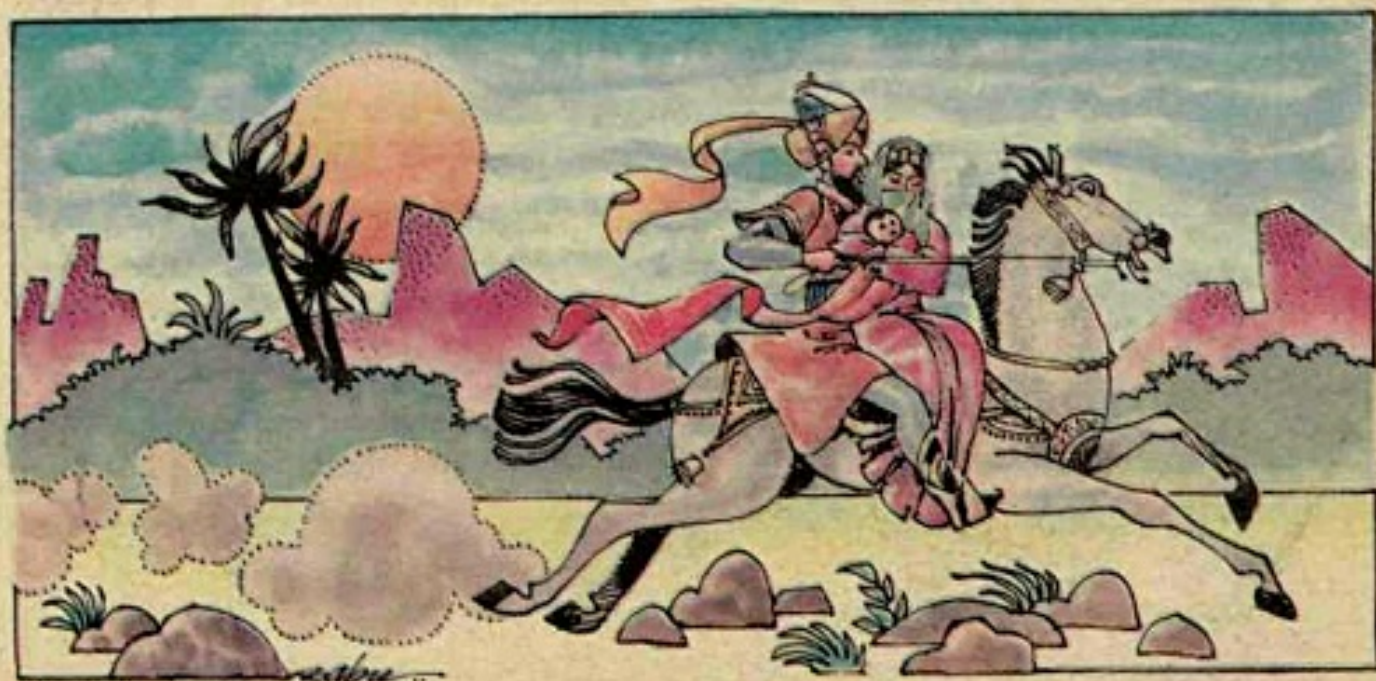
conspired with the invader.

The Sultan was notified of the attack when it was too late. He had just enough time to escape with his queen and his infant son.

The royal couple rode on for a full night and a day. They were tired. They had come to a hilly oasis on the brink of the desert. They relaxed there for a while.

Suddenly they heard the sound of gallop.

"We have no time to lose. At such moments decisions have to





be quick. I am sure, bandits or soldiers, nobody will harm this innocent child," said the Sultan. He dragged the queen into a hiding. He feared that if they take the child with them, it might cry. That would surely attract the attention of those who were coming.

Soon a gang of bandits descended from the hills. They were surprised to see a solitary child crawling in the valley. The bandit-chief took a fancy for the boy. He picked him up and the gang galloped away.

The couple came out after the gang went away. The child was missing. The Sultan had no way

of knowing who were the people who took the child away.

The Sultan's wife broke down. But the Sultan consoled her, saying, "It is not certain how long we would live and in what condition. Someone has taken up our child. Let us pray that he will look after the child properly."

The Sultan and his wife managed to reach the house of a relative who too was a Sultan. Years passed. The Sultan was keeping a careful eye on his Sultanate. When he understood that the conqueror was not very careful, in guarding it, he marched upon his town with the help of his relative's army.

He took his castle by surprise. The king who had unjustly occupied it was slain. The Sultan got back his throne. He did all that was possible to trace his lost son, but in vain.

One day a party of merchants was attacked by a bandit gang. The merchants were prepared to meet any such danger. They not only defended themselves successfully, but also killed a number of bandits and captured even a greater number of them. Only a few could flee.

The Sultan rewarded the mer-

chants and ordered for the captured bandits to be killed.

As the bandits were being led away, the Sultan's attention went to a young man among them. The young man was of noble bearing and very handsome. The Sultan spared his life even after he had learnt that he was the son of the bandit-chief. The young man was employed in his court.

As days passed, the Sultan's fondness for the young man went on increasing. He handed over to him the keys of his treasury and ordered that nobody can draw even a coin without his approval. In a short while the young man made his department the most ideal of all the departments. Nobody was deprived of his due; nobody could take any money without proper justification.

This made the Sultan and most of the people happy. But the ten old Vizirs were very upset. They had got accustomed to looking upon the Sultan's treasury as their private treasure trove. Now they were not allowed to go anywhere near it.

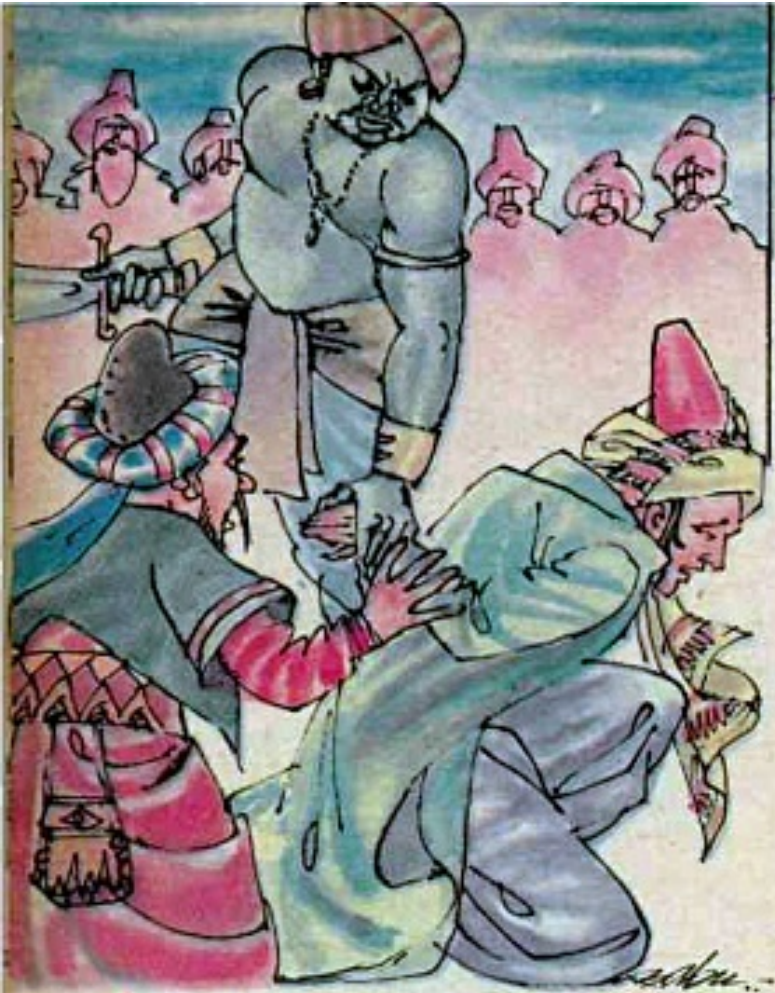
One day the ten Vizirs entertained the young man to a sumptuous dinner and made



him drunk. They carried him into the palace and, knowing fully well that the Sultan was elsewhere, laid him in the royal bed. They had heavily bribed a few palace servants to make this possible.

The Sultan was back at midnight. Great was his anger at finding someone lying in his bed. He shouted for the chambermaids, not knowing who it was that lay in his bed.

"He seems to be drunk, my lord," said a maid. The Vizirs were waiting nearby under some pretext. They came running and all of them said in unison that to sleep in the Sultan's bed was the



greatest insult to the Sultan — unheard of in history!

"Let the fellow die!" shouted the Sultan.

"That is the right thing to be done, my lord," said the Chief Vizir and all the rest agreed with him.

The young man was dragged out of the bed. He was still in a daze. The Vizirs told the Sultan, "This young man has been claiming for some time past that he was greater than the Sultan!"

The Sultan, on seeing the young man, felt extremely sorry. Surely, he could not be happy to see him die! But it would be very embarrassing for

him to withdraw his order at that stage!

Next morning a crowd gathered on the execution ground, for the news of the young man's fate had spread like wild fire. People sighed, as they loved him much.

A man broke out of the crowd and fell on the young man, saying, "My son! I was under the impression that you were dead—killed either by the merchants or by the Sultan's soldiers after your capture. But I am more unfortunate than I thought myself to be—now that I must see you alive only on the eve of your death!"

The Vizirs were present there in their full force. They understood that the weeping man was none other than the bandit-chief. They got him arrested and ran to the Sultan to give him the glad tidings.

"Let me have a look at the fellow," said the Sultan and he went out to the execution ground.

"My lord," said the bandit-chief, "Kill me by all means. But spare my son who is an angel from above!"

"Every father thinks his son to be an angel from above!" the

Chief Vizir commented with scorn.

"Sir," said the bandit-chief, "how could this boy appear on a desolate valley, without a single soul to attend upon him, if he were not an angel from above? All know him to be my son. He is not. I insist, he is an angel!"

"What did you say? Did you find him in a valley? Which valley? When?" asked the impatient Sultan.

The bandit-chief narrated in detail the account of his finding the child. There was no doubt about the fact that the young man was none other than the lost prince!

The Sultan embraced the young man, tears rolling down

his cheeks. An investigation showed that he had been laid on the royal bed by the clever Vizirs—who wished to be too clever.

"Throw all of them to their death from the highest peak in my Sultanate," ordered the Sultan.

"Father, you would not know me had they not put me in your bed. That way they have done us a service, haven't they?" asked the prince.

So the Sultan amended his order. "Throw them in gaol!" he said.

As far as the bandit-chief was concerned, he was made the sole Vizir!

(Adopted)



THE SCHOLAR AND THE SECRET

Long ago there lived a great scholar in a village. He was the pride of the locality. The landlord of the area who was a good man was very much impressed by the scholar.

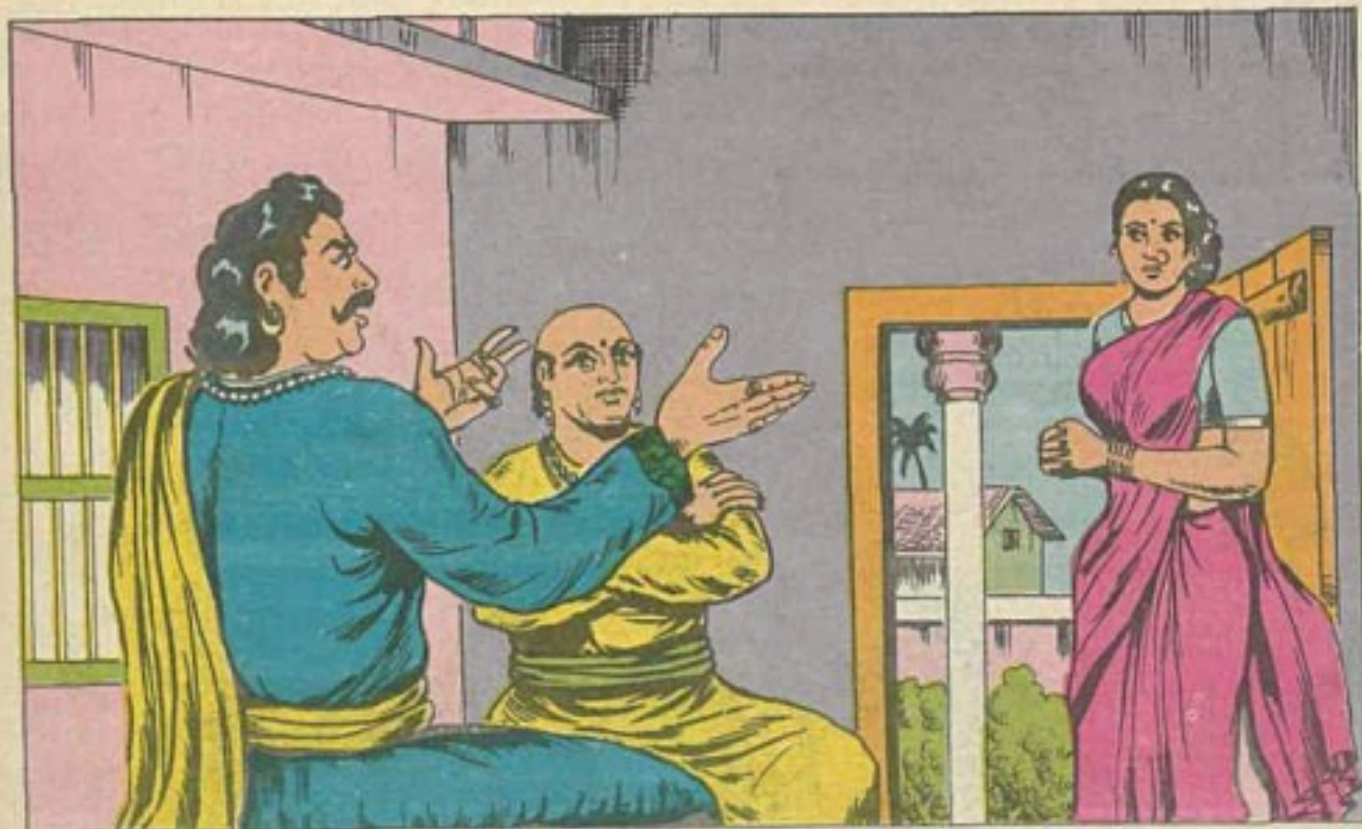
"The scholar is the glory of my estate. I should do something to make him live comfortably," thought the landlord. He asked some farmers to supply the best rice to the scholar's household. He asked some others to send him the best of produce in their vegetable farms. He told a milkmaid to

carry fresh curd to his house every day early in the morning.

The milkmaid lived across the river. But she was so dutiful that she never failed to bring the scholar his milk in time.

One day, however, she got late. It so happened that the landlord had paid a visit to the scholar that very morning. In the landlord's presence the scholar took the milkmaid to task and demanded to know why she got late.

"Sir, today the ferryman came late. That is why I am late.



I could not have crossed the river without the ferryboat!"

"Why not?" asked the scholar in mock-seriousness. "We know of people who have crossed the turbulent ocean of life chanting the Lord's name. Couldn't you cross a mere river?"

The milkmaid had no answer to the question. "How much of your profound wisdom can this poor milkmaid appreciate, O learned one!" observed the laughing landlord who had been much impressed by the scholar's ready wit.

Days passed. The milkmaid was never late again; she never failed to deposit the curd-pot at the scholar's house before the

sunrise.

One day it was raining heavily and the weather was cyclonic. Because of this it was all dark even though sunrise was only an hour away.

The scholar opened his door at hearing a knock. The milkmaid was there with her pot.

"It is brave of the ferryman to ply his boat in this weather," commented the scholar.

"There was no ferryman. In fact, I don't wait for the ferryman any more," quietly replied the milkmaid.

"How do you cross the river then?" asked the surprised scholar.

"Why? Hadn't you passed on



the secret to me? I chant the Lord's name and cross the river!" was the milkmaid's reply.

The scholar looked at the milkmaid with even more surprise. His surprise was not because of the milkmaid's feat, for, there was no question of his accepting her statement as true. He was surprised that she had the audacity to utter such a lie!

But innocence was writ large on the milkmaid's face. The scholar lost his courage to challenge her.

"My daughter, the river is in spate. How did you cross it really?" he asked again.

"Sir, I have never bothered about any problem. I chant the

Lord's name and enter the water. It never rises above my ankles!"

"Can I see you crossing the river on your return journey now?" asked the bewildered scholar.

"If you so please, Sir!"

The scholar followed the milkmaid. It was still dark because of the clouds, though the rain had been reduced to a drizzle.

The milkmaid went to a lonely spot on the bank and once looking at the scholar over her shoulder, stepped into the river.

The scholar was sure that because of some unknown reason the river at that particu-



lar stretch was shallow. He thought that it would be an excellent idea to discover this strange trait of the river for himself. He followed the milkmaid.

The water never rose above his ankles. He walked on. He could see only the faint contours of the milkmaid ahead of him.

There was a flash of lightning. That dazzled his vision for a moment. He could not see the milkmaid, but he could see a boat plying very close to him.

Suddenly an eerie doubt crept into his mind: If the water was really ankle-deep, how can a boat pass over it?

As soon as this doubt came, he suddenly found himself sinking. The water had risen up to his neck.

He gave out a cry, struggling to remain afloat. Men in the

boat heard him. They pulled him into the boat.

"Where is the milkmaid?" asked the scholar, wondering if she had not been drowned.

The boatman rowed on and took the scholar to the other side of the river. The milkmaid stood there, a bit surprised over the cry. She did not know that the scholar was following her.

The scholar jumped off the boat and fell at the woman's feet. By then dawn had broken out.

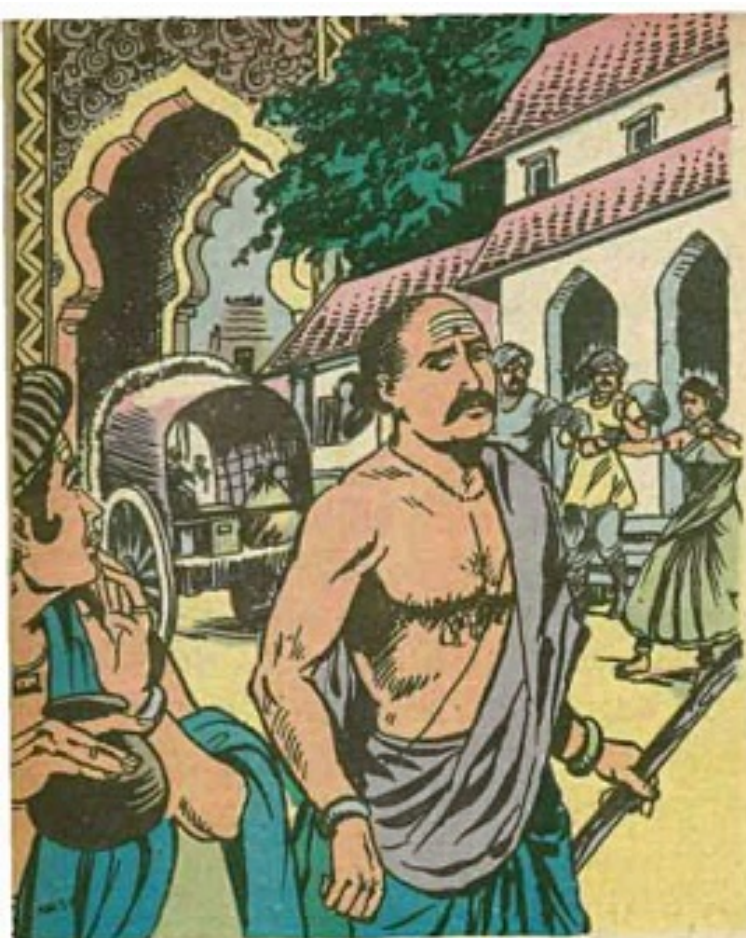
"Sir, what are you doing?" The scholar's conduct scared the milkmaid.

"My daughter! You won the Lord's Grace by your simple faith! Only if I could exchange all my scholarship for the virtue you have!" the scholar exclaimed through tears.



AJAMIL

—The Power of Sacred Word—



In days gone by the Brahmins had to follow a very strict code of conduct. In their words and deeds they were required to be truthful, just and gentle. In fact, anyone who could live up to such ideals was a Brahmin.

Ajamil, a young Brahmin of Kanyakubja was noted for all these virtues. But, out on a travel, he came in contact with some lustful people who gambled and drank and indulged in all sorts of unworthy activities.

Ajamil was influenced by them. It was unfortunate that he gradually forgot his duties. He even forgot his family and married a woman who sold wine and

entertained rich people for the sake of money.

The couple had eight sons. The youngest one was named Narayana. Ajamil was extremely fond of him.

Ajamil fell ill. His condition grew critical. He was about to die. Officials of Yama, the God of Death, appeared near him. They were to carry his spirit to hell.

When he knew that he was going to die, he cried, "Narayana! Narayana!!"

Needless to say, he wished his son to be near him.

Instantly there arrived emissaries from Vishnuloka, the realm of Vishnu. Narayana being the name of Vishnu, Ajamil's intense call brought them there.

The officials of Yama and the emissaries from Vishnuloka had an argument between them about Ajamil's destination—

whether it should be hell or heaven.

Ajamil, though in a swoon, heard what passed between the two groups of spirits. He remembered how he had strayed from the true course of his life and how unworthy he had become for the calling of a Brahmin. His repentance was intense. He took to praying ardently.

"Well, he really seems to be a devotee of Vishnu. Perhaps we were here by mistake," said the officials of Yama. They went away.

Once the moment when Ajamil was to die passed, he

began to recover. He was a changed man now. He led a most pious life. A new destiny was created for him. By the time he died at ripe old age, his sins had been washed away by his dedication to Vishnu. His spirit went to Vishnuloka.

The story of Ajamil created a tradition: parents named at least one of their children after their deity, so that they could utter the deity's name even without meaning to do so. A sacred word has its own power, though it is most powerful when uttered with sincere devotion.

Primary source:

The Bhagavatam



Keeping Cool— With A Jumbo-Sized Fan

Its big ears, which dissipate body heat and can be flapped like fans, help the African elephant to keep cool in the tropical heat.

What animal went to war against the Romans in 218 BC? What animal makes a purring sound when it wishes to give a warning of danger? The answer to both these questions is: the elephant.

Some of these large animals marched with an army led by Hannibal, a general from Carthage in North Africa, against the Romans. But a few survived the perilous trek over the Alps into Italy, and they contributed little to the victories Hannibal gained before his eventual defeat.

Most of Hannibal's elephants were from the African forests. The rest were Indian elephants which the Carthaginians had acquired from traders.

Huge Animals

Although elephants at one time roamed over most of the world, the Indian and the African are the only two kinds which remain. The African is the larger and is the one most often seen in zoos. This elephant's very large ears are not so much an aid to hearing as a help in keeping cool. The large surface area of the ears assists in the distribution of the body heat, and when waved they also act as fans.

The Indian elephant lives in the forests where there is more shade, so it is not necessary for it to have such large ears.

Of the two species, the African elephant is the larger, standing over three-and-a-half metres at the shoulder. Its forehead slopes back much more than that of the Indian, and its trunk is more furrowed, with two lips at the end instead of one. Its tusks are usually longer. It is these tusks which have made the elephant a target for poachers in Africa and Asia.

The variety of protection offered to elephants in Africa varies from country to country. There are about 100,000 in Africa, many in national

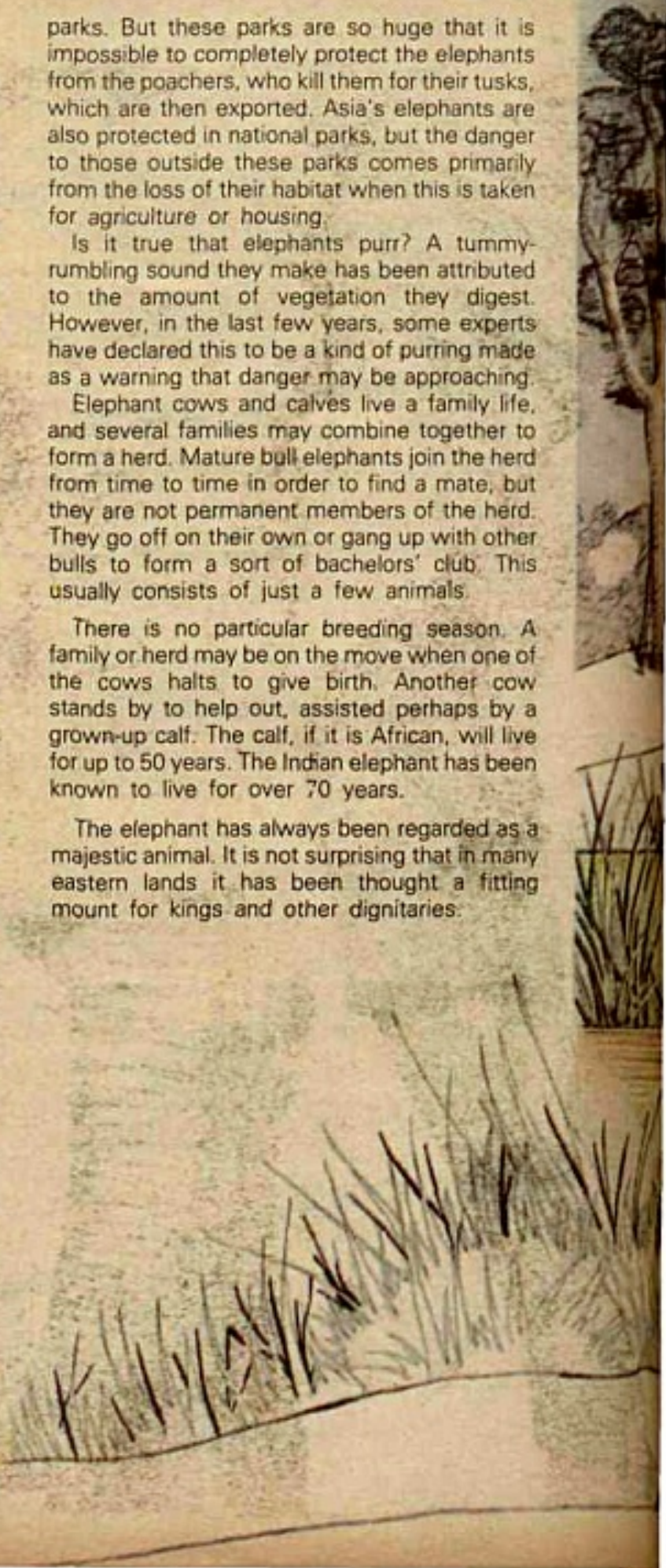
parks. But these parks are so huge that it is impossible to completely protect the elephants from the poachers, who kill them for their tusks, which are then exported. Asia's elephants are also protected in national parks, but the danger to those outside these parks comes primarily from the loss of their habitat when this is taken for agriculture or housing.

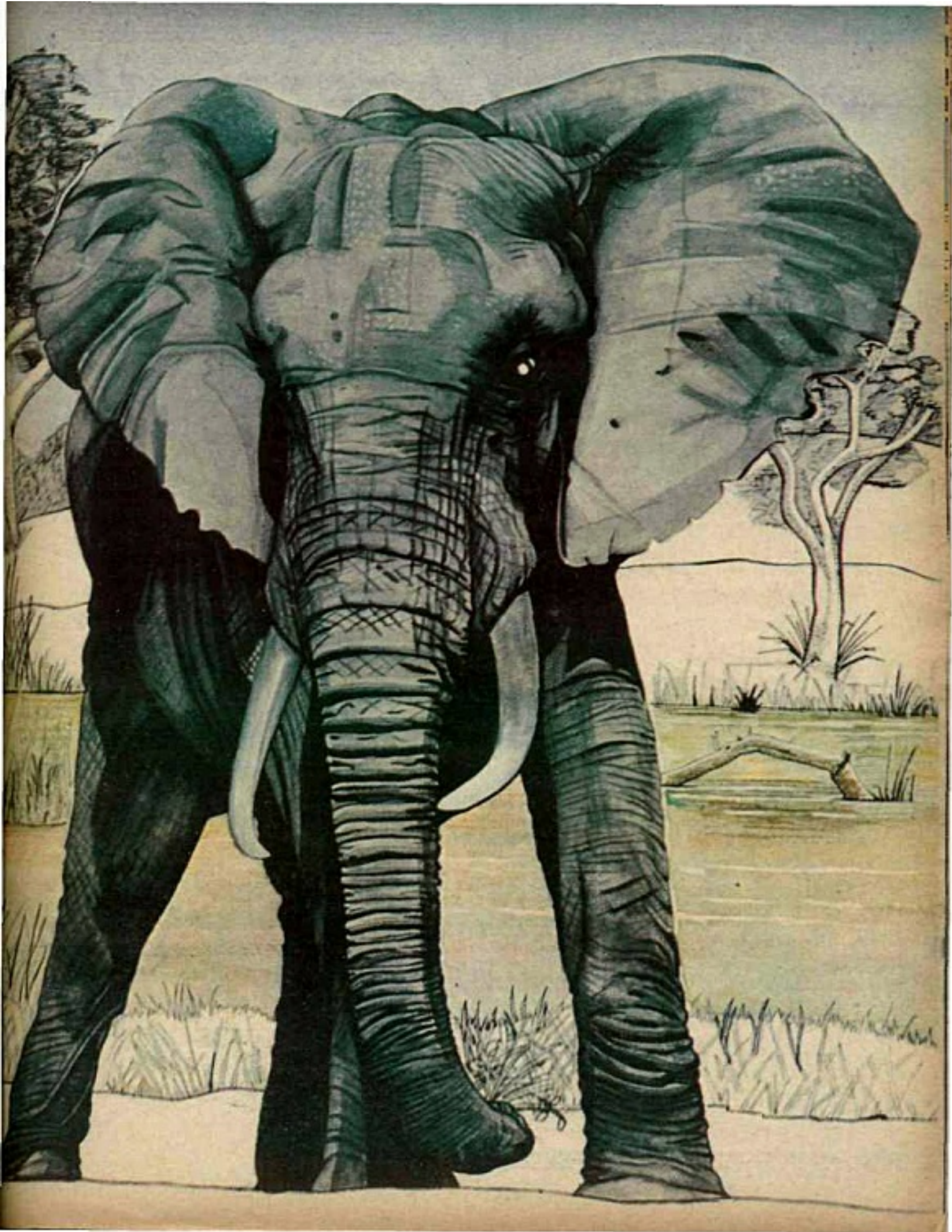
Is it true that elephants purr? A tummy-rumbling sound they make has been attributed to the amount of vegetation they digest. However, in the last few years, some experts have declared this to be a kind of purring made as a warning that danger may be approaching.

Elephant cows and calves live a family life, and several families may combine together to form a herd. Mature bull elephants join the herd from time to time in order to find a mate, but they are not permanent members of the herd. They go off on their own or gang up with other bulls to form a sort of bachelors' club. This usually consists of just a few animals.

There is no particular breeding season. A family or herd may be on the move when one of the cows halts to give birth. Another cow stands by to help out, assisted perhaps by a grown-up calf. The calf, if it is African, will live for up to 50 years. The Indian elephant has been known to live for over 70 years.

The elephant has always been regarded as a majestic animal. It is not surprising that in many eastern lands it has been thought a fitting mount for kings and other dignitaries.







MADE OF MOONLIGHT

A thief was on the prowl in the city of Vijayanagara. The guards of the town were unable to catch him. Soon, the news of the smart thief reached the court of the king.

That was the time when the illustrious king Krishnadeva Raya ruled Vijayanagara. Among his ministers was the witty Tenali Raman.

Raman went round the town talking to different groups of people and telling them: "I'm really afraid that one day the thief will come to my house and loot all the precious gold and jewellery my wife has recently inherited from her mother!"

Soon, word spread around in the town and the thief too came to know about it. Needless to say, Tenali Raman only wanted the same thing — that the thief should come to burgle his

house. He told his wife about his plan of trapping the thief. Every night they expected the thief till late hours.

One night, the crook came stealthily into the balcony of Tenali Raman's house. Raman heard his footsteps and woke up his wife. And the well-rehearsed dialogue began.

"I'm really afraid of the gold at home. What if a burglar enters our house?" asked the wife.

"Oh! don't bother about a chest of jewels and gold. If ever you lose it, I shall get you more," said Raman.

"From where do you get all this gold and the precious stones?" asked Raman's wife. "Of course, as you taught me, I tell everybody that I got them from my mother!" she added.

"Why should I tell you all my

secrets? Be happy by having them and do not question."

But the lady went on insisting for an explanation...

"All right. I'll tell you. But keep the secret to yourself. I steal the gold and jewellery from the king's treasury!" replied Raman in a grave tone.

"Oh! no! not from the king's treasury! What if the guards catch you and put you to death?" asked the wife.

"Don't you worry about it. No one will ever be able to catch me. I know a magic word which helps me..."

"What is it? Please tell me," asked the wife.

"Shoo! Don't shout. I'll tell you, but keep it strictly to yourself. On the full moon night I climb to the roof of the king's treasury and opening a ventilator there I wait till the rays of the moon go through it. At the moment, I say thrice, "Ombhraati" and the moonrays turn into invisible ropes. I catch them and slide down into the treasury. I tie up the gold and the jewellery in a bundle and then climb back with the help of the moon-ropes," explained Raman loud enough for the thief to hear him clearly.



Fully satisfied, the wife pretended to be sleepy: "All right. Now I have no worries. I can sleep peacefully," she said.

The thief who heard the whole conversation between the couple returned home without plundering any house that night. He resolved to purloin the king's treasury. That was now the only thing worth stealing; all other wealth was too small and not worth the trouble, he told himself.

On the next full moon night, the thief was on the roof of the king's treasury. As soon as the rays of the moon fell through the ventilator, he uttered the



magic word and grasping the moonrays jumped through the opening. What he caught was obviously just air and therefore he fell down into the treasury straight on his face, breaking both his hands and his nose.

The guards, informed by Raman, were expecting this to

happen on the full moon night! They hauled him out of the gold bags and dumped him in jail.

The king was very happy with the ruse played by Tenali Raman for catching the thief and he rewarded him with a hundred gold coins and generous praises.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





*New Tales of King
Vikram and the Vampire.*

THE PRECIOUS STONES

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of thunderclaps and howling of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, you are no doubt a daring and determined soul. Even then one should be sufficiently guarded against dangers when one is dealing with ghosts and ghouls! Are you wearing any talisman as your safeguard? May be that the stone your ring contains has some special power. You must be aware of it. The pity is, many people do not



realise the value of such stones. Let me give you an example. Pay attention to it. That might bring you some relief."

The Vampire went on: In the city of Shripur lived a merchant named Jaysurya. He used to trade with faraway islands and had prospered well. He was also respected as an honest and intelligent man.

During one of his voyages he lost a ship. His loss was very big. His friends came to convey their sympathy to him. Among them was Ravishankar. He looked at Jaysurya's ring and asked, "Are you wearing this one for long?"

"No, I put it on only a month

ago," replied Jaysurya.

"Is that so? That means the ship was lost after you began wearing the ring. I can see the ring contains a precious stone. All sorts of stones are not beneficent to all sorts of people. I'm afraid, the stone set in your ring is inauspicious for you. Stop using it forthwith. I have a good friend named Virbahu who is an expert dealer in precious stones. He can tell you which stone will be good for you, after he studies your palm. I suggest that you pay a visit to his shop. He will give you the right sort of stone," said Ravishankar.

Jaysurya had never bothered about the effect of the stone that was set in his ring. A friend had presented the ring to him and he had put it on because it looked beautiful. True, he had heard that different stones had different effects, but he had neither any knowledge of the subject nor any curiosity about it.

As advised by his friend, Jaysurya took out the ring. He also went to meet Virbahu, the expert in precious stones.

"I have the stone that will bring you good luck. It costs ten thousand rupees. But I know

that you are in distress. That is why I will part with it for half its cost," said Virbahu, after passing his eyes on Jaysurya's palms.

"Are you sure that the stone you are going to sell me will bring me good luck?" asked Jaysurya with some hesitation.

"I am absolutely sure. You will see how it will save you from dangers," said Virbahu. He said again, after Jaysurya had paid for the new ring and was taking leave of him, "Please meet me after a year. By then you will be under the influence of another planet. I'll give a different stone and make it cheap for you too!"

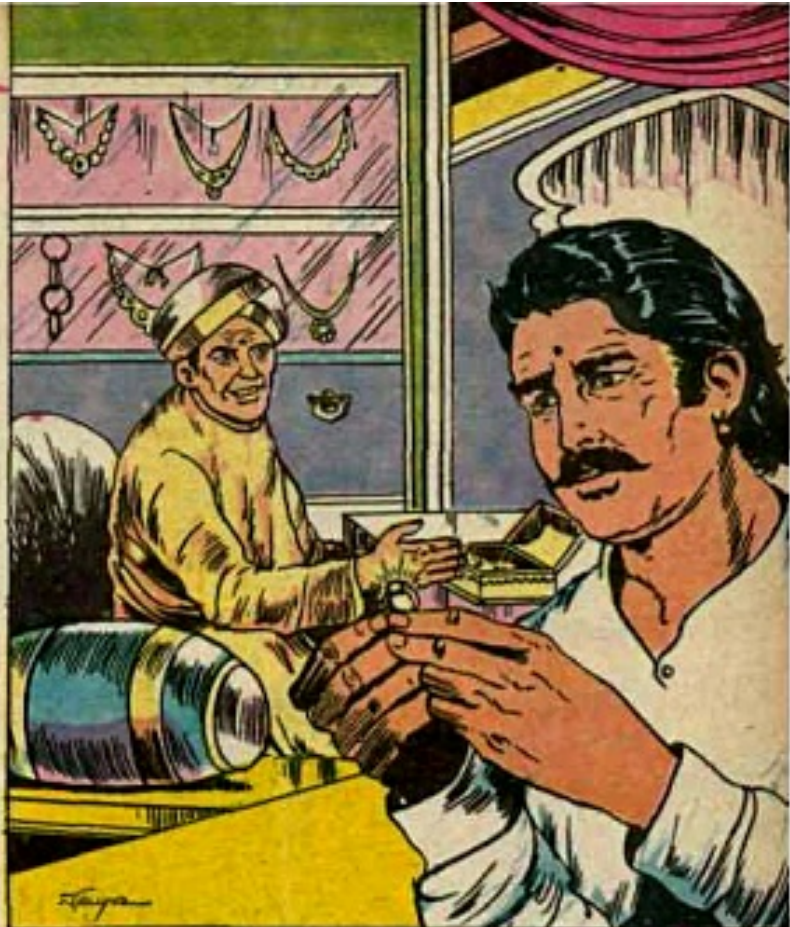
A year passed. Jaysurya was passing that way when Virbahu's eyes fell on him. "Come in, Sir, please come in!" he shouted at him.

Jaysurya entered his shop. "How are things with you? All is well, I hope!" Virbahu commented.

"Things are happening as they should happen according to my destiny," replied Jaysurya.

"Please say a little more clearly," suggested Virbahu.

"No use saying more than what I said. It will not benefit



you, either! I repeat, whatever is to happen to me according to my destiny, is happening."

But Virbahu won't let him go away so easily. He insisted on knowing all about his present condition.

"Well, another of my ships sank recently," said Jaysurya.

"I see. How many ships were abroad?"

"Three."

Virbahu clapped his hands at Jaysurya's reply and said jovially, "I proved right! The stone I gave you protected your other ships! Now, you may change for another stone. This costs fifteen thousand rupees. But I will give

it to you for ten thousand only."

Jaysurya took out the ring Virbahu had given him earlier and laid it before Virbahu and walked away quietly.

"Won't you please listen to me?" called out Virbahu. But Jaysurya paid no heed to Virbahu's call. He walked away.

The vampire paused for a moment and demanded of King Vikram, "O King, how did Jaysurya fail to appreciate the virtue of the stone given to him by Virbahu. Didn't it save two of his three ships? Even then why did he refuse to receive a new stone that would have done more good? Why did he return his old ring? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

King Vikram replied forth-

with: "Jaysurya neither trusted nor distrusted the stones. He was wearing a stone because it had been presented to him. Ravishankar had inspired in his mind some trust in the stones. But that trust was shattered when his second ship sank. It is clear that he had faith in destiny. The precious stones may have some effect on men, but the effect is not strong enough to change men's destiny. Also, his experience and intelligence must have told Jaysurya that Virbahu was no more than a mere merchant who was eager to sell his ware. It was out of his disgust that Jaysurya returned his old ring and walked away in silence."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





THE WILL AND THE WAY

Grandfather Narasimha returned to his village. Twenty years back he had left it and gone to the town in search of fortune.

When he had left the village he was but a simple farmer, owner of two bullocks and two acres of paddy land. He was hard-working and honest.

Having saved some money, he took a loan from one of the village money-lenders and went to the town, where luck favoured him.

It was not long before he repaid his loan and started a small cloth-business. As years passed, Narasimha grew more and more prosperous and his shop became one of the biggest ones in the entire town.

When his three grandsons came of age, for he had lost his

only son at an early age, Narasimha decided to leave his business to them and to return to his village. His heart was pining to breathe once again the quiet atmosphere of the village.

Narasimha bought a large piece of land in his village, built a beautiful house on it and settled himself contentedly with a lovely garden around it. He took great care of every plant and tree and saw to their healthy growth. His joy knew no bounds when the first flowers of his garden blossomed in bright reds and yellows.

The lovely flowers not only pleased the grandfather but also attracted some goats. One day, the grandfather spotted a goat crawling into the garden through a gap in the fence. It went straight for the luscious



green plants. Of course, he chased it away angrily and immediately set to repairing the fence.

A couple of days later, the same goat was found nibbling at the flowers. The grandfather shooed it off and it escaped through the open gate of the garden. He realised his mistake and for several days he closed the gate very carefully. But, often the visitors who came to see Narasimha would forget to keep the gate closed and the goat came in...

One day, as he was thinking hard about a solution to this goat-nuisance, his grandchil-

dren came from the town to pay him a visit. After asking them a few questions about the business, he found that his grandsons were just whiling away their time and wasting all the wealth he had passed on to them. He felt sad at heart, but, he did not reprimand them.

The youngest of the grandsons, Raghu, suggested a solution to the problem of the goat. He said, "Grandpa, why don't you fix some pipes above a pit in the ground as they do in big offices in the town?" "Why all that hassle? Just call up the goatherd and give him a good warning," said Sudhir, the eldest one.

Of course, none of them did anything himself!

When the goatherd was called, he pleaded: "Sir, I am very careful about my goats. I don't let them trespass into any garden. But, Sir, believe me, out of my fifty goats it is only that particular goat that has taken a fancy to your garden. You are much more educated than I, can't you do something to stop the goat from coming into your garden?"

Thus, the youngest grandson's suggestion of the pipes was

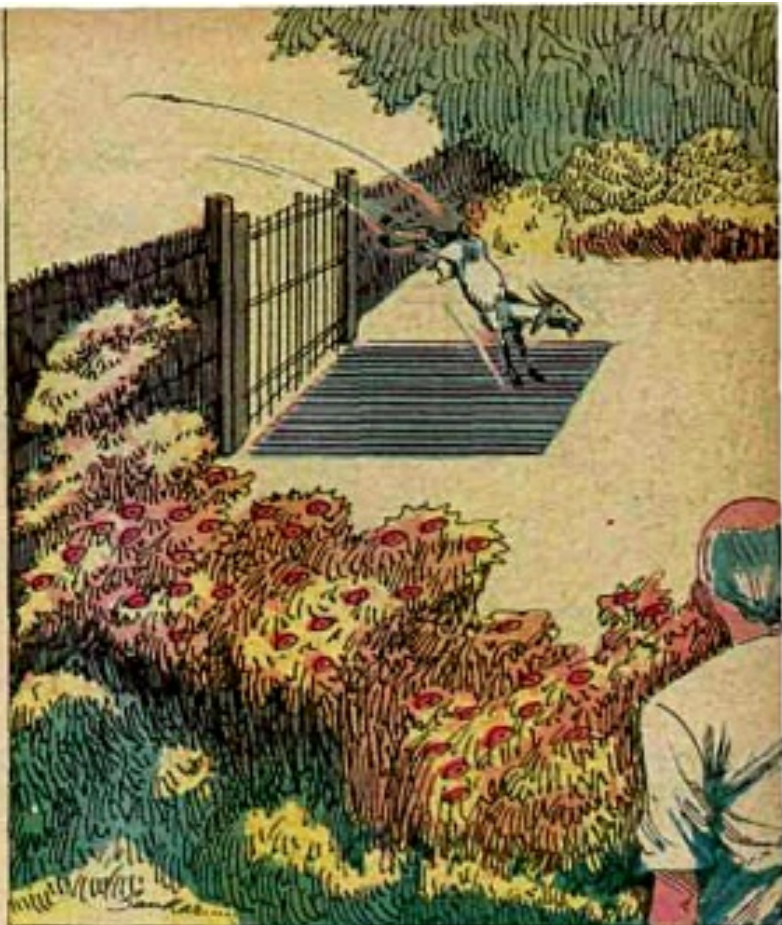
taken up and the entire family felt sure that they had at last succeeded in keeping the goat away from the garden.

One early morning, however, the grandfather heard a bleating from his garden. He jumped up from the bed and rushed out. He felt sorry at what he saw: the goat was trapped between the pipes. He went to it, released its legs stuck in the pipes, opened the gate and let it go. The grandsons were not happy to hear what their grandfather had done. "Why did you set it free? We should have kept it tied in the garden until the goatherd came searching for it. We could have then extracted a good fine from him..." shouted Sudhir.

The grandfather repeated the act when he found the goat trapped for a second time. And the second grandson, Prabodh was infuriated with him. They decided that the third time it got trapped they would capture it themselves.

A few days passed and the goat did not come to the garden.

However, one morning, when the grandfather was already in the garden, tending his plants, he suddenly heard a loud bleat. Before he realised what it was,



he saw the goat leaping clean over the gate and landing clearly across the pipes! He stood amazed at the great broad-jump and stood dumb for a while.

The goat walked into the garden and started munching the choicest flowers.

The three grandsons rushed into the garden and when they saw the grandfather staring at the goat and doing nothing to shoo it away, they were shocked.

"What's all this, grandpa? Are you treating the goat for a sumptuous luncheon?" asked Sudhir.

"My sons, I am really amazed



at the perseverance and patience of this goat. Imagine the struggle and the risk it is ready to go through in order to get its daily food. And you have a lot to learn from this goat, you who do nothing the whole day except whiling away your time and spending your money in stupid entertainment."

The old man sighed and then said again.

"I've decided to withdraw from you the business I have given you, and, only when I see you working hard and honestly, shall I return it to you. Until then I shall run it myself. Meanwhile the smart goat deserves to be respected. He has earned his food."

The three grandsons hung their heads in shame.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCE





FROG IN THE WELL

After completing his studies at the Ashram of Yogi Vishweshwar, Baudhanath went into the world to preach the message of the ancient scriptures. He preferred meeting people and talking to them of spiritual things to sitting in the Ashram and teaching a class of students.

In one of his journeys across the country, Baudhanath once came to a small village known by the name of Laxmi Nagar. Word reached from house to house that a great teacher was in their village, and, soon people flocked around Baudhanath. He told them stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharatha, taught them the teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita —

people were enthralled by his talks.

Very soon the villagers told him about their village and its people. One day, they complained about Dhanikram, the rich grocer.

"He is the worst man in our village," said an old man.

"More than that, he deceives and cheats us," said an elderly lady.

"Worst, he is a terrible miser," said a boy, "he won't ever part with a little sweetmeat, free."

"What right has he to double the prices of rice and dal?" asked an angry young woman.

"All that is pardonable by



God, but, he'll be thrown in Hell for not coming to the temple, and do you know why he doesn't come?" asked the priest who was sweating on his pate.

"It's simple — he has no devotion," observed Baudhanath.

"No, no, that is because he does not want to pay the offering of five paise for the puja!" the priest corrected him.

Baudhanath became curious about Dhanikram and expressed his wish to see him. "He seems to be a selfish man, one who has no faith in God. It would be interesting to talk to such a person and try to change

him. I'll infuse in him some faith in God," thought the young preacher.

As he entered Dhanikram's dark house, smelling of grocery, the merchant came out, bowed to Baudhanath and said, "Master, it is my great privilege to have you in my humble house. In fact, I was myself thinking of coming to you this evening in order to seek your blessings for my business. In any case, I'm very grateful to you for your coming."

"Dhanikram, by the Grace of God you seem to be having everything that a man requires for a comfortable and happy life. Then why do you want to earn more and more money and that too by deceiving others? One day, when death will take you away, are you going to carry with you all this wealth? Whatever extra money you have, share it with the needy and the poor and live a useful, life," advised Baudhanath.

"But what would I gain by sharing my hard-earned wealth with others?" asked the fellow.

Realising that he understood only the language of give-and-take, Baudhanath replied, "By such good acts God gets

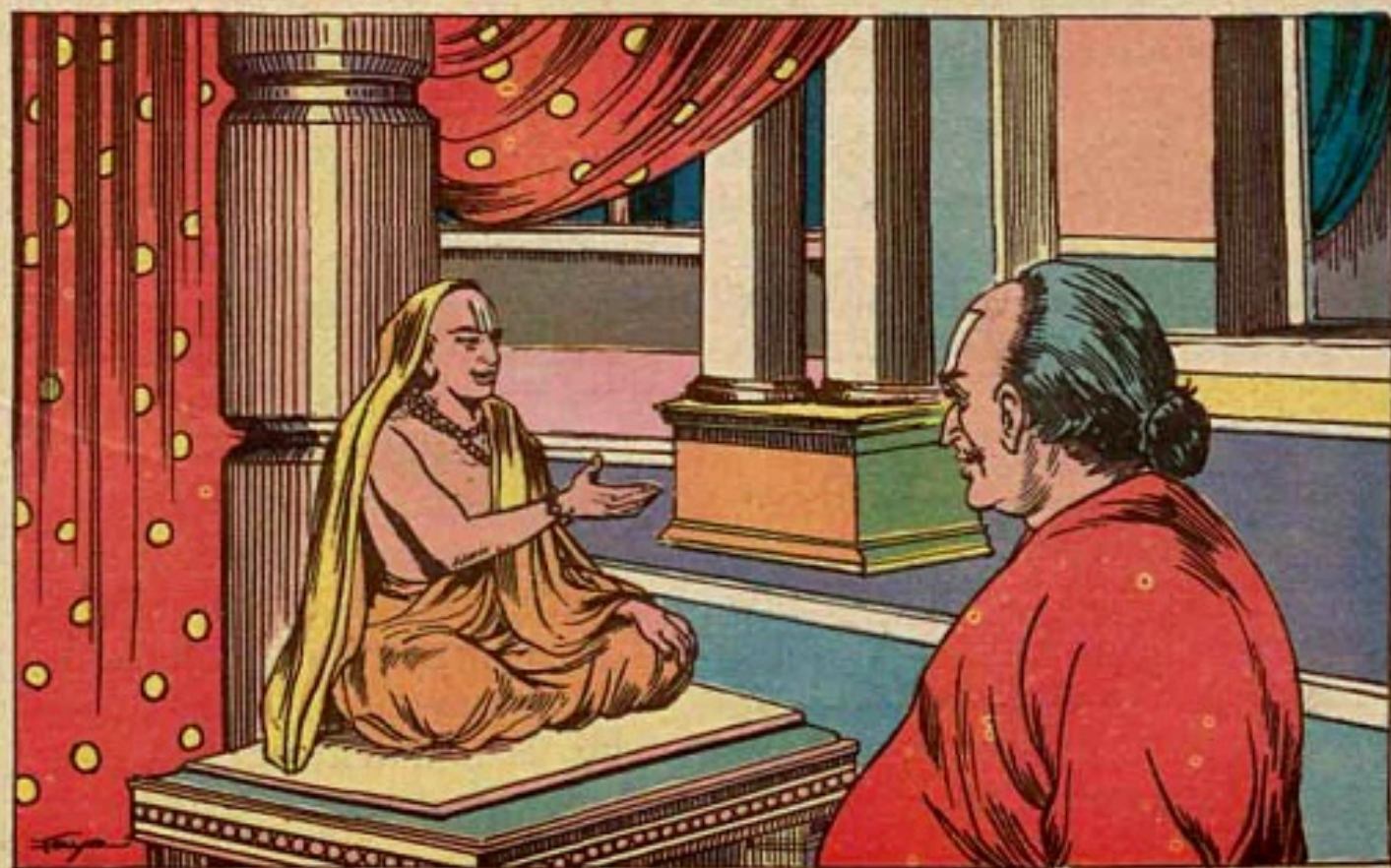
pleased. He will secure for you a special place in heaven. And there your happiness will be thousand times greater."

Suspicious Dhanikram argued! "Master, here, on earth, I manage a small business and I find it so very difficult to maintain a proper account of each client and debtor. Often one's account gets transformed to another's and there is great confusion. What is the guarantee that such mistakes do not occur in heaven and my account of good deeds will not get interchanged with someone else's?"

After a pause, Dhanikram said again, "Master, you've also

mentioned about reserving a special place for me. But, no one knows when one would die and if someone dying before me goes to heaven and is given my special place? Where is the assurance against such an oversight taking place?"

While Baudhanath was wondering what to say, Dhanikram resumed, "Lastly, Master, there are hundreds of Dhanikrams in this world. What if all my good deeds and the special seat kept for me in heaven are by mistake given to another Dhanikram? There are too many risks and uncertainties in what you say. When I die I will myself present





my case and negotiate with God and see how much benefit I can get. You need not worry about me. Thanks!"

Baudhanath stood speechless. He remembered the story of a frog in a well which refused to believe that there was world

outside the well! Dhanikram was so sure of his own cleverness that he would not believe that there was any wisdom outside him!

Baudhanath, who was so sure of his capacity to impart knowledge, now accepted defeat and learnt a lesson in humility.

The Gold Mountain

Lal and Bilal were having a jolly walk. "I wish I tumble upon a mountain of gold!" said Lal.

"What will you do with it?"

"I will own it!"

"Won't you give me half of it, I being an old friend of yours?"

"No!"

"Has friendship no value for you?" asked Lal, angrily. They quarrelled and almost came to blows. A passer-by intervened and asked, "Where is the mountain of gold?"

"I wish I had it!" said Lal.

"Fine," said the passer-by. Looking at Bilal, he advised, "You wish a separate mountain of gold. That will leave both in peace. Right?"





Rivers of India

ORIGIN OF THE GANGA

One moonlit night the sage Narada was returning from the earth to heaven. He was merrily singing while playing his Veena. His path lay through the charming Himalayan dales and valleys.

Suddenly his eyes fell on a group of supernatural beings consisting of both male and female members, all extremely beautiful. "Who are these beings?" Narada wondered. Curiosity led him towards them.



"Who are you?" Narada asked those beings. On a closer look he saw that each member of the group had lost one limb or another. If one had lost an eye, another had lost an ear, yet another a hand, so on and so forth.



At first reluctant to talk, the beings said that they were gun-dharvas who were the spirits of Ragas and Raginis or the musical modes. Each time a singer sang a Raga wrongly or with vanity, its spirit received a blow. That is how they had lost their limbs.

Narada, himself a singer, felt embarrassed. On his enquiry, he was told that only if the Perfect Singer, Lord Siva, sang, they will recover their lost limbs. Narada forthwith went to Kailash and appealed to Lord Siva to sing.



Siva agreed to sing, but on condition that there should be at least one Perfect Listener in his audience. He also revealed who were the Perfect Listeners: they were Brahma and Vishnu. Narada approached Brahma.

Brahma was only too glad to hear that Lord Siva had agreed to sing. To be on the safe side, Narada wanted both the Perfect Listeners to be present. He approached Vishnu, who too was delighted at the news.



Vishnu, Brahma and the gun-dharvas gathered before Lord Siva. Lord Siva who remained silent most of the time, engrossed in meditation, at last began to sing. Indescribable was the charm of his melody. All listened entranced.

Inspired by Lord Siva's song, the gundharvas began to dance. Their maimed limbs became whole. With joy and gratitude they bowed down to Lord Siva again and again.





The vibrations of the melody transformed Nature into enchanting scenery. Flowers bloomed and the breeze grew soft. The atmospheres of Heaven and earth became charged with tenderness.

But something unexpected also happened. Vishnu got so deeply identified with the tender melody that a layer of His body grew liquid and flowed down. Brahma alone observed this condition.



Brahma lost no time in capturing the flow in His vessel. This liquid was to be the origin of the river Ganga. Because it began with a liquified layer of Vishnu's body, the Ganga is considered so sacred.



TWO MASTERS

Vasundhara was her name. But, Usha, her mistress called her 'Vasu'. She had been serving in her house for more than a decade. She had not only gained her mistress' love but also her trust in her. At least that is what Vasu thought.

One day, however, fate seemed to have plotted against Vasu. It happened this way:

The master of the house, Pulakesh, returned home very late that day. He was very tired and not in a mood to talk to anyone. He took a quick bath, gulped his dinner, and then, unrolling his mattress on the verandah, lay down. He took off his gold ring, as it had become a bit too tight on his finger, and put it near his pillow and fell asleep within minutes.

He woke up in the morning

and found that his ring was missing. He called his wife and his son and asked them if they had seen the ring.

"No, father. I didn't come anywhere near your bed," replied the son.

"Then, who came here? A thief? A ghost?" shouted Pulakesh.

"Only Vasu came here last night to put a glass of water near your bed," answered his wife Usha.

"So, she is the one responsible for it. Call her up immediately, I'll take her to task," commanded Pulakesh.

Vasu almost fainted when she heard the accusation. "Master, I've been serving you for more than a decade. Have I ever stolen a single thing from your house? How do you then sus-



pect me for this?" she said in self-defence.

"If you have not stolen all these years, it does not mean that you cannot steal now. Maybe you did not have the opportunity before to steal anything valuable!" said the master.

And within the hour, Vasundhara was seen going towards the neighbouring village, with her small bundle of clothes on her head.

Vasundhara spent a few days with her parents. Soon she found a job in the household of Hemanth, a merchant. As days passed she gained the trust and faith of the merchant's wife

Malini. She was indeed hard working and there were no complaints against her.

Early one morning, Vasundhara prepared, as usual, hot water for the master and then went to the market for buying some vegetables for the house. He finished taking his bath and put on his shirt. He found, to his great surprise, that a hundred rupee note was missing from his pocket.

"Malini, have you taken some money out of my pocket?" asked Hemanth.

She hadn't taken it.

Immediately, Vasundhara was suspected. Malini became very angry. "She was already once accused of theft and it is my foolishness to have employed her. Once a thief, always a thief," said Malini.

"Do not jump to conclusions. We'll ask her first if she knows anything about it," said Hemanth.

"If you ask her, then obviously she will deny it. Let me dismiss her right away," said Malini, unable to control her anger.

Just then Vasundhara came into the house. As she crossed the threshold of the room she

bent down and, picking up a currency note, asked, "How is this note lying here? Master, is it not yours?"

In a flash Hemanth knew what must have happened. The note had fallen from his pocket when he was taking off his shirt at night. Malini was pleasantly surprised at seeing the note. She felt bad that she had suspected Vasundhara without knowing the full truth.

"Vasundhara, you seem to be such an honest woman; how is it that you were blamed of theft in Pulakesh's house?" asked Hemanth.

"Sir, I did not steal the ring. It was my ill-fate and their misfortune," replied Vasundhara.

"How is it their misfortune?" asked the master.

"Sir, the morning I was relieved of my job at Pulakesh's

house, I went to their kitchen to pick up my bundle of clothes. Suddenly, I saw a glittering object in a rodent's hole. I looked in and saw that it was the master's lost ring. However, I could not tell them about it because they would have then been confirmed in their suspicion. They would have thought that I had placed it in the rodent's hole and was pretending to discover it to save my job!" explained Vasundhara.

Next morning, Hemanth and Malini went to Pulakesh and told him all about Vasundhara's honesty. Then Pulakesh went into his kitchen and found his ring in the same hole that was described by Vasundhara.

Pulakesh and Usha felt bad for having accused her wrongly and they gave Vasu some money to atone for their mistake.





A BEARD FOR SALE

Gulab and Amir were neighbours. Having done business together for long, both had grown rich.

In spite of the huge wealth amassed, Gulab was a greedy man. He loved harassing and cheating people. Especially, he troubled an old widow and cheated her of a thousand rupees, the saving of her life-time. The widow wept before Amir and Amir decided to act.

One day, while chatting with Gulab, Amir started praising his long and flowing beard.

"Your beard seems to be the sign of your prosperity," said Amir.

"Yes, there are many people who envy my beard," replied Gulab with a proud smile.

"How I wish I had half your beard! But, alas, I have neither

any hair on my head nor a beard," sighed Amir. "I wish I could buy it from you," he added.

"Many have said the same thing. In fact some persons have even offered to buy it from me," said Gulab laughingly.

"Don't laugh. I am really serious. If you are ready to sell it, I'm ready to purchase it," said Amir.

"All right. I shall charge you only rupees one thousand. Others are ready to pay even rupees two thousand," said Gulab, silently laughing over his neighbour's foolishness.

"Done; I'll pay you one thousand rupees for it. But, Gulab, you will have to grant me a special favour. I'll give you an advance of rupees two hundred and the rest I'll pay you

after six months. Do you agree?" asked Amir.

Gulab thought that it was a good bargain. He felt happy at his own cleverness and he agreed with Amir.

"But," said Amir, "the beard will belong to me from the moment I pay you the advance. You have only to remain its custodian for six months. I'll take it away from you after I pay you the full amount. Agreed?" asked Amir.

A contract was drawn to that effect and both the parties signed the necessary documents.

Amir said that he was proud to be the owner of such a luxurious beard. Whenever he wanted to enjoy the feel of it he would go to Gulab and stroke it. Some days he would comb it and apply oil to it. Gulab used to get irritated. But, Amir reminded him of the contract!

One morning Amir took a fancy for colouring 'his' beard. He went to Gulab and without telling him about his plan, poured colour on his beard.

"Amir! What is all this nonsense" shouted Gulab.

"Gulab, remember, it is my beard and not yours anymore, I



can do what I want with it," replied Amir.

All this treatment of pulling and combing and colouring the beard drove Gulab mad and he could not stand it any longer.

One day, when Amir came to Gulab's house, he found him sleeping. He bent down and suddenly pulled at the beard, just to have some fun.

But lo! the beard came off into Amir's hands. He looked at it with surprise. It was a fake beard!

"What have you done to 'my' beard?" asked Amir.

"Ha! ha! that teaches you not to trouble me. I have shaved off



‘your’ beard and put instead this one. You can carry it home and stick it on yourself! Ha!” laughed Gulab, feeling elated at his trick.

“I will not accept this beard. I have not paid for this beard,” replied Amir.

They quarrelled. And they went to the Kazi with the quarrel.

The Kazi heard them and said, “Gulab, Amir is right. Your beard belonged to him

and you had no right to destroy it without his permission. Hence, you have to refund him the money given to you by Amir, and over that you must give him one thousand rupees as a penalty.”

Gulab had lost his beard, his money and his honour. Amir gained the money, but, keeping with his decision, he gave the one thousand rupees to the distressed widow whom Gulab had cheated.

Do You Know?

The ant is the animal that has the largest brain in proportion to the size of its body.





LET US KNOW

Who is the world's greatest inventor?

Ramesh Deora, Shillong.

Thomas Alva Edison is considered the world's greatest inventor. His inventions include: (a) the carbon telephone transmitter that made Bell's telephone commercially successful, (b) electric generators (c) paraffin paper, (d) an electric pen that later developed into the mimeograph, (e) the photograph (f) electric light (g) the first practical typewriter (h) the vacuum tube that makes modern radio and television possible, (i) a motion picture camera and sound system that prepared the way for the talkie.

What was the life-span of the primeval dinosaurs?

—Susmita and Surekha, Bhopal.

Over a hundred years.

Is there any civilised Western country where women were not permitted to vote till recently?

—Zainab, Bombay.

Women were not allowed to vote in France until 1944.

Is it a fact that the primitive man had smaller brains than we have?

—D. Marshall, Calcutta.

On the contrary, the Neanderthal man possessed larger brains than the modern man possesses.

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



P.V. Subramanyam



Sundara Murthy

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for Feb. '85 goes to:—

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— Colton.

It is easy to flatter; it is harder to praise.

— Jean Paul Richter.

Chance makes our parents, but choice makes our friends.

— Delille.



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teeth, with the tip
of your tongue.



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dip made by your
tongue and hey
presto ... what a
big bubble!

BIG FUN



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Raju paints without brush

Raju Paints without brush.

Raju was a clumsy boy. He liked to paint no doubt. But always used to spill water from the bowl, smudge the floor, spoil his hands and clothes.

Which mother would tolerate such things? 'No more painting' said his mother.

Mohan felt sorry for Raju. He showed him his box of oil pastels. No water, no brush, no spilling and smudging.

Just pick the pastels from the box and start drawing—what a range of colours!

Parrot green, Lobster orange, Peacock blue, Sunflower yellow and many many more.

Now Raju's mother too has bought him a box of oil pastels.



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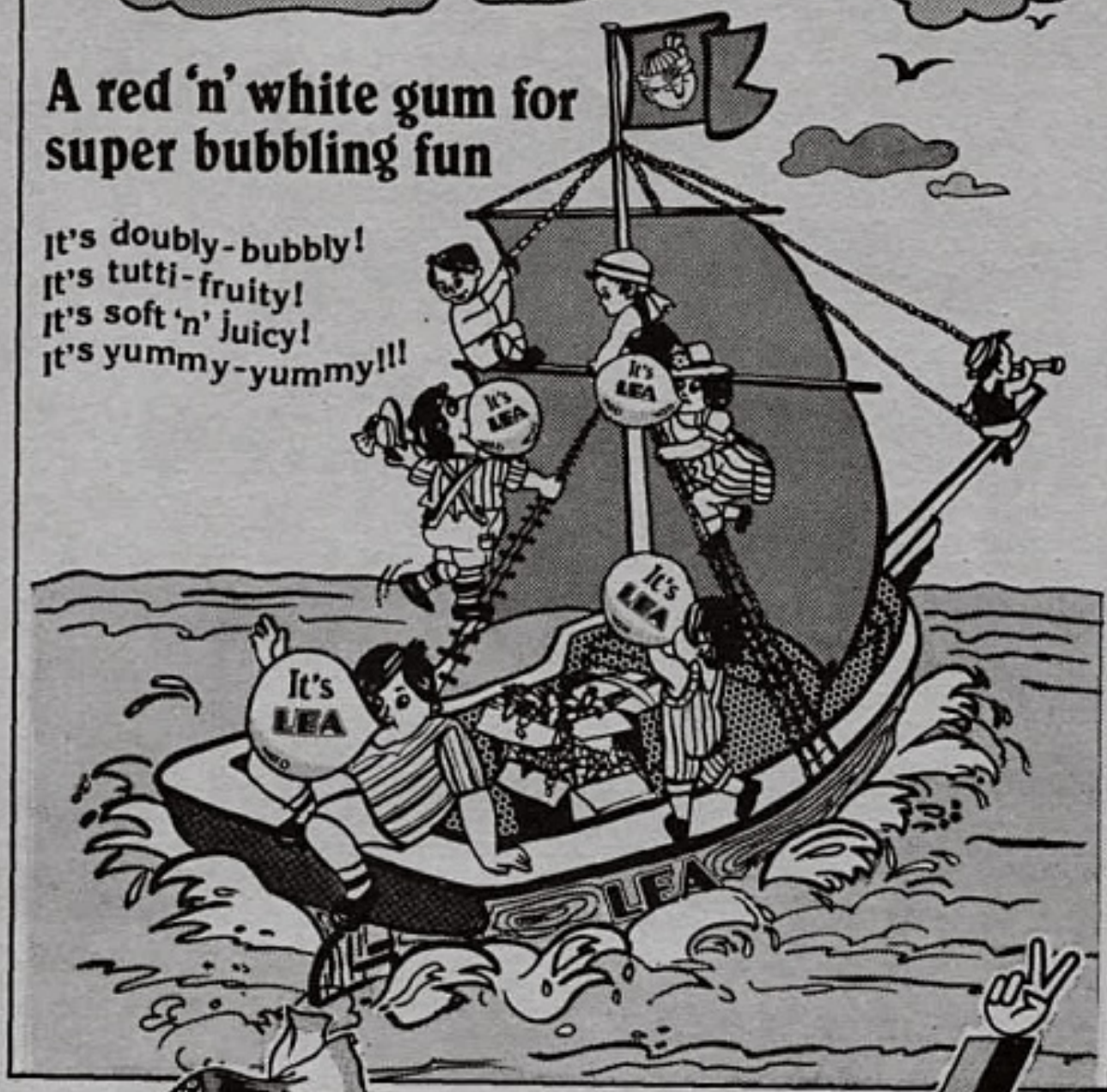


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1st Prize: Dhananjay Thakur, Hyderabad. Mahesh Shekar Ancham, Bombay 67. M. Supraja Reddy, Cuddapah. Satish K. Iyer, Bombay 400 060. 3rd Prize: Aniruddh V. Magai, Bombay 84. R.V. Ravikumar, Bombay 421 202. Johnson D'Mello, Bombay 400 098. M. Prabha, Madras 55. K. Hanakrishna, Secunderabad 15. Gauri Ashok Desai, Bombay 400 064. Damodar R. Chari, Goa 403 601. Dilip Sharma, Bombay 57. Rajashree Dash, Bhubaneswar. D.K. Sinha, Secunderabad.

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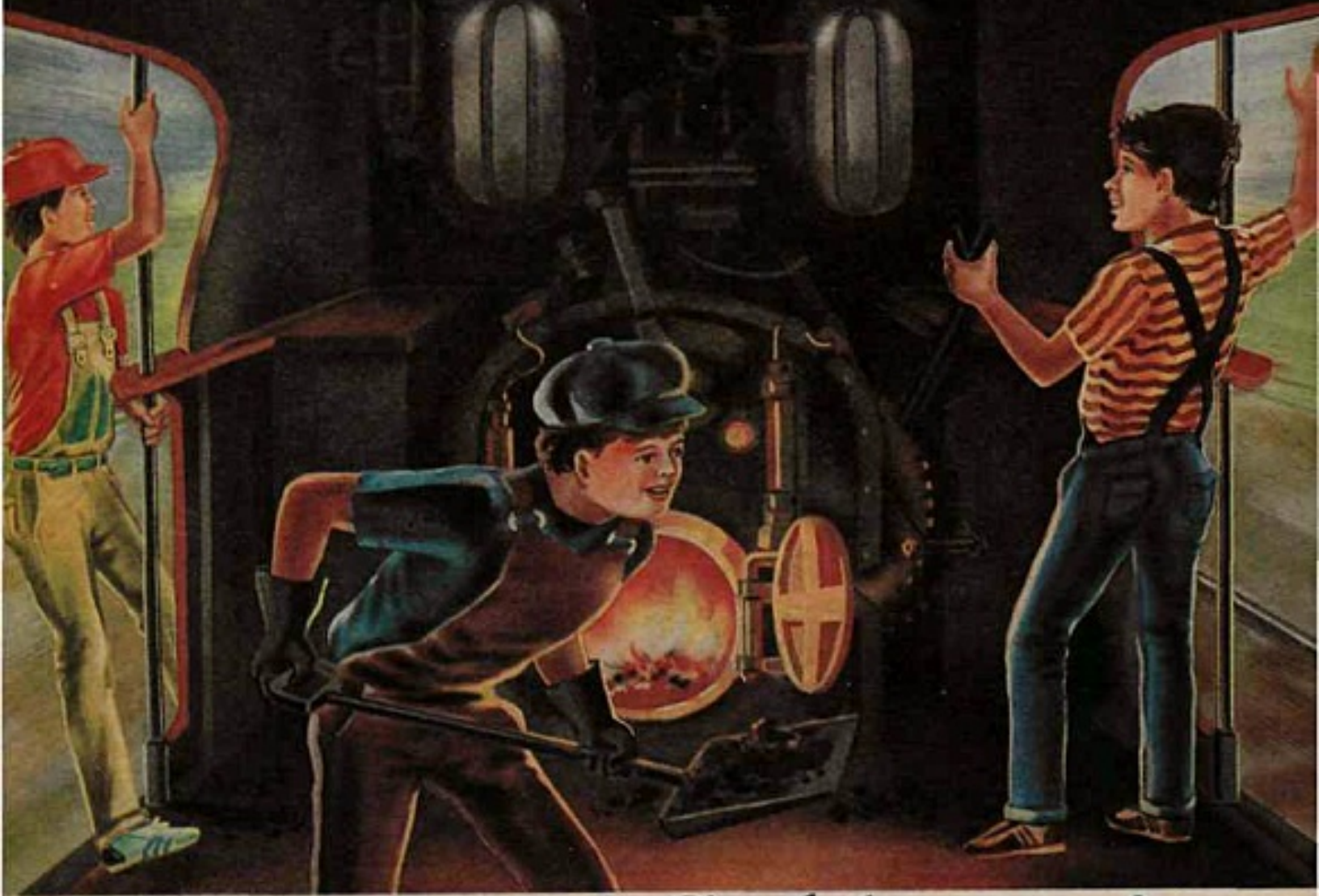
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